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An inaugural essay
on

Corypelas facialis
Fry.

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On Erysipelas of the Face.

Closely allied to the mucous membranes, in point of texture and function, is the skin; and the inflammation of this structure is attended with some interesting peculiarities. Genuine inflammation of the skin has peculiar characters, which have acquired for it, the name of erysipelatis inflammation. It is characterized, by pruritus, heat, tension, and redness: but instead of a tendency to circumscribe itself, its disposition is to spread; instead of abating, it goes on to the formation of vesicle. It may occur on any part of the skin, but the face is the most common seat of it, which is attributable to the peculiar organization of the skin of this region, and the disposition in the facial capillaries to receive red blood, as we observe in the various emotions of the mind, manifested in the phenomena of blushing, and the suffusion from guilt. A great diversity of opinion has prevailed among writers, respecting the nature and seat of this disease; if my views on this subject be correct, it is of gastric origin. The primary seat is the mucous tissue of the stomach and intestinal canal; owing to the very close sympathy existing that tissue, and

clearly allude to the human faculties in fact of
 action and function, in the skin, and the instrument
 of the structure is alluded with more interesting points
 action. Human instrument of the skin has function
 character, which have appeared for it, the name of organ
 function instrument. It is characterized, by function
 that, form, and nature, but instead of a tendency to
 instrument itself, its disposition is to spread; instead
 at first, it gives to the function of touch. It may now
 to any part of the skin, but the fact is the most common
 is not of it, which is attributable to the particular
 action of the skin of the organ, and the disposition in
 the form of the skin is more or less, as we know in
 in the various actions of the organ, manifest in the
 instrument of touching and the surface from which
 it is derived of organs has function among action
 respecting the nature and use of the skin, of organ
 in this subject is evident, it is of organic origin. The primary use
 is the human skin of the structure and instrument, which
 owing to the way the organ is situated that it is

the dermoid, the irritation is extended to the latter, and we have an effluviem. Symptomatology, Erysipelas of the face, is ushered in with eddness, (sometimes amounting to rigors) and other symptoms of pyrexia; The pulse generally frequent, full and hard. The mental operations are somewhat affected, and drowsiness, in some cases delirium, accompany the hot stage. The skin during the progress of these symptoms is hot, and dry, and these symptoms having continued for two or three days, redness and swelling appear on some part of the face. The colour of the affected part, is sometimes mingled with a peculiar yellowish tint, which readily disappears on pressure, immediately returning on pressure being removed. There is a distressing sense of heat and tingling in the inflamed surface. The swelling and inflammation, extends to the scalp, affecting it with great soreness. The eyes are sometimes closed from the adjacent swelling. As the swelling and inflammation spread, they become less apparent, at the point, pri-

- mainly affected. Erysipelas seldom penetrates beneath the skin; but in some severe cases, it extends to the cellular tissue, then, we have phlegmon or adenæ, according as the inflammation is circumscribed, or diffused.

Duratio Mali It is liable to considerable variation; In young persons it commonly terminates in 6 or 8 days, but in those more advanced in years, it is often protracted to the twelfth, or fifteenth day, even later. The termination is brought about in several different manners; the mildest, is that which consists in a gradual disappearance of the symptoms, with desquamation of the cuticle; But the most common is, after a certain time, (about the fourth or fifth day) vesicles arise of different sizes, containing a thin yellowish or transparent serum, which burst, and leave the skin, in that part, of a livid colour. When it proves fatal, the patient generally dies apoplectic on the seventh or ninth day, in more violent attacks as early

as the third. Diagnosis - It is sufficiently obvious from the preceding symptoms; no one who has ever seen a person labouring under this disease, or heard it well delineated, could mistake it. So very distinct and well-marked are its characteristic signs.

Prognosis, It is the more dangerous in proportion as central symptoms are manifested; The chance of recovery is diminished, the greater the advancement in years, (and in very young children, among the latter the complaint is exceedingly prone to a fatal termination; and entire suppression of urine is very generally a fatal symptom -

Etiology - Contagious - The discussions relative to the contagiousness of Erysipelas, have been as keen as on every other occasion in which the doctrine of contagion is involved. When it wears a well-marked typhoid character, and occurs in confined establishments, as hospitals; it may extend by contagion, particularly, where

there is a defective or an ill-regulated system of Ventilation. But as the disease, usually occurs in this country, it wears a decided inflammatory aspect, and so far from proceeding from contagion, it can rarely if ever be traced to that cause. It often appears to be an attendant on a gouty diathesis; Our eloquent and very distinguished, Professor of the Practice of Medicine, has known it to succeed, and alternate with Goutyagra. It occurs among the same class of persons, in which, gout is commonly found; (viz) Those who indulge in excessive luxury, debauchery and intemperance. It is commonly attributed to cold applied when the body is overheated; Insolation; a violent paroxysm of grief has been known to produce it. In many instances no exciting cause of any kind can be traced. There is in some persons a



a strong disposition to this kind of inflammation; and in them it is brought on by very trifling causes, as indigestible or rancid foods. This disposition appears to be hereditary, in some cases; and it may possibly depend on some peculiar organization of the skin.

The tendency in Erysipelas, to metastasis is very great, and is, a circumstance in the history of the disease of the utmost importance; as it is the great source of danger in idiopathic erysipelas, and regulates, in no inconsiderable degree, the treatment. Pneumonic affections have been observed in some cases; But the brain is the Organ, which is most liable to suffer.

Treatment- The treatment of Erysipelas has proved a fertile theme of controversy. It has been supposed, that the



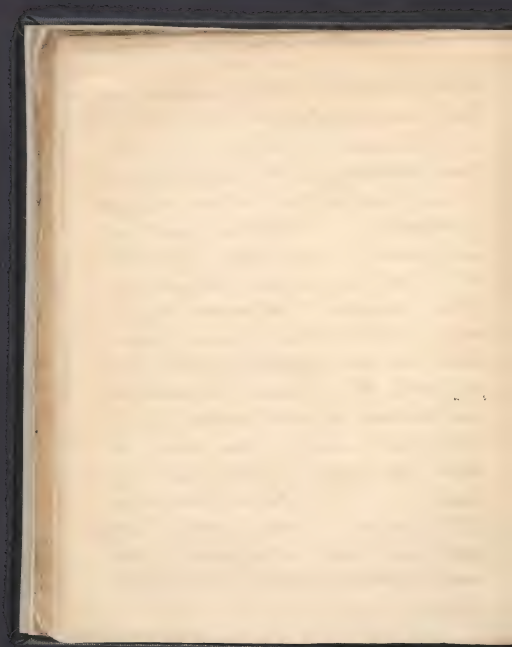
common principles, applicable to other inflam-
matory diseases are inapplicable here; But
the supporters of this opinion do not seem
to have taken into consideration the variety of
causes from which erysipelas originates, and
the almost infinitely varied circumstances
of situation, age, and constitution, under
which it appears. Keeping these in view,
it does not appear, that any important
difference of principle is to be established
between the treatment of erysipelatous, and
other inflammatory affections. Some
practitioners, instead, of pursuing a steady, bold,
and determined antiphlogistic plan of treat-
ment, which, the very obvious pathology of
the disease, is calculated to excite, and which
is amply corroborated by experience, have
been induced to adopt a diametrically opposite
course, by abundant and unfounded fears, of-



debility; consequently, rejecting venesection, cups,
Leeches, and purgatives, our chief dependencies
in inflammations of internal mucous sur-
faces; Substituting, in their stead, the inefficient
and even deliterious, tonic and stimulating plan
of treatment.

"Venesection," says Dr. Good
"was formerly recommended, and has been
so of late by a few writers, but upon mis-
taken principles. I can conceive very few
cases in which it has a chance of being re-
vivable, and the application of leeches always
exasperates the effluence. We should first
cool the body by gentle laxatives, and in-
stantly have recourse to a tonic plan. The
bark given largely has rarely failed of
success."

The above observations
of Dr. Good, are in direct opposition to the
pathological views, and experiences, of the
most enlightened portion of the profession,



in this Country, on the subject. Although, cases may occur in aged persons, and in debilitated habits, in hospitals and other confined situations, wherein depletion requires to be administered with caution, perhaps to be altogether inadmissible; but instances are exceedingly rare, where a decided tonic or stimulating plan of treatment can ever be advisable or proper.

The plan of treating this disease, by the most distinguished practitioners of the United States; and which is far the most rational (based on correct pathological views of the disease, and on experience) is the following.

In the commencement of an attack, very prompt and particular attention must be paid to the thorough evacuation of the Alimentary Canal; An emetic of antimony proves very beneficial in arresting the farther progress of the disease, when



it fails in this, it generally mitigates all the symptoms - The evacuation of the stomach must be quickly followed by that of the bowels; Calomel, worked off by calomel Magnesia alone, or with Sul. Epsom, is to be preferred; This, with exciting the surface moderately, by mild aërophoretic, constitute the necessary treatment in the forming stage. After the disease is firmly established, a more extensive plan of treatment becomes necessary; Here if the Pulse be full and active, attended with Coma and Delirium, venesection must be enforced to a considerable extent; and repeated as often as necessary for the reduction of the symptoms demanding its use; Concomitant with this measure, we should resort to Vomiting with Ipecac and Emetic Salts, (Emetics are the very best remedies in Coma from erysipelas, according to Professor Chapman.) Copious Spurgings, first



with Calomel, than the milder cathartics.
The force of the Circulation being thus reduced, the alimentary canal sufficiently evacuated, (which is a "sine qua non," to an easy cure) and the Coma and Delirium still continuing; we must have recourse to cups.
Leeches, to the temples, forehead, and Occiput, to be repeated as often as circumstances may require. But when the above symptoms still continue or decline too slowly, the head must be shaved, and covered with a blister; Under these circumstances, great relief, has been known, ^(to follow) a spontaneous flow of blood from the nostrils; which, induced Physicians to imitate nature, by the application of 20 or 30 leeches to the nostrils, and not without beneficial effects. When the powers of life are manifestly ebbing from protracted suffering; then, and not till then, is the exhibition of Stimulants appropriate.



The external, are the rubefacients, sinapisms and blisters, The internal are Volatile Alkali, Opium, Camphor, wine, bark & cetera. In the progress of the disease, the cutaneous affection, is sometimes so exceedingly troublesome, as to demand particular attention. Different external applications have been proposed, such as cold lotions, warm spirituous fomentations, and dry powders, their influence on the disease does not appear to be very great, therefore, that one should be selected which best relieves the heat, and uneasy sensations which the patient experiences. Having suffered exceedingly from the disease myself, and used the several applications recommended, for the relief of the uneasy sensations above mentioned, ^(see) I am inclined to believe, that I experienced more benefit, from equal parts of water, and solution of acetate of ammonia, than any ^(other) remedy. A watery solution of Opium - Milk and water - Lead water and Laudanum -

Bran tea - Dry flour - have all, had their advocates,
and are doubtless serviceable in certain cases - The
Mercurial Ointment, has long been warmly recom-
mended in this disease; when applied to the face,
it has been said by some, to excite salivation -

